



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

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PSC CHAIRMAN URGES PASSAGE OF SENATE BILL TO HELP LOW-INCOME FAMILIES..... ENCOURAGED BY RECENT PRESIDENT DECISION ON LIHEAP

Jefferson City (January 29, 2003)---Missouri Public Service Commission Chairman Kelvin Simmons addressed The Committee to Keep Missourians Warm this morning in the State Capitol Rotunda urging the Missouri Legislature to pass SB 127, sponsored by Senator Mary Groves Bland (D-Kansas City), which would give the Missouri Public Service Commission the authority to consider the ability to pay as a factor in setting utility rates.

“Senator Bland’s bill will help low-income families avoid an energy crisis by helping them maintain heat-related service. Similar programs in other states have been effective and a program like this is needed in Missouri,” stated Chairman Simmons.

Chairman Simmons made the comments during an energy forum sponsored by The Committee to Keep Missourians Warm, an advisory group of government and not-for-profit community action organizations.

The Missouri Public Service Commission also continues its advocacy for Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) appropriations in the federal budget bills. It supports \$1.7 billion for FY 2003, \$2 billion for FY 2004 and \$2 billion in advance appropriations for FY 2005.

Recently President Bush announced the release of an additional \$200 million in LIHEAP emergency funds to help with heating bills due to increases in home heating fuel prices this winter. According to a United States Department of Health & Human Services release, Missouri is expected to receive \$2,957,449.

“I am encouraged by the President’s decision regarding LIHEAP funding for the needy,” stated Chairman Simmons. “Higher heating fuel prices this year versus last, combined with extremely cold temperatures recently in Missouri, are placing a real financial strain on low-income Missourians as they struggle to pay their home heating bills.”

LIHEAP, federally funded and administered by the states, provides financial assistance to low-income citizens in helping them pay their utility bills. LIHEAP funding in Missouri is administered through the Missouri Department of Social Services.

“The Missouri Public Service Commission has worked and will continue to work with Governor Bob Holden in making our thoughts and concerns known to the President. I remain focused on continued efforts to get additional LIHEAP funding for Missouri. When evaluating the federal budget, the voices of low-income families need to be heard and additional federal dollars need to be given to LIHEAP. The President’s release of \$200 million in LIHEAP emergency funds certainly is encouraging for those in need,” stated Chairman Simmons.